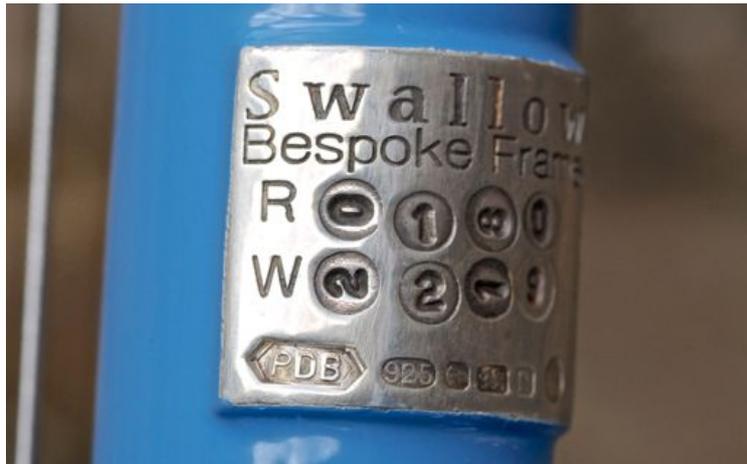


## Swallow Bespoke Frames – Briefing notes for build

Swallow frames have only ever been made as one-off bespoke items for each customer, with around 2500 being made between 1981 to 1999. There have been no stock or off-the-peg frames. Each frame is made-to-measure and we work very closely with the client to build exactly what they want and need. We do not use set designs or styles but produce what will best reflect the client's use and style.

Each frame is individually built, either by Peter Bird or Robert Wade, using Reynolds or Columbus tubing. The hand-made frames each have an individual hallmarked silver number plate showing the date it was completed and the initials of the builder (usually located on the lower part of the down tube), together with a solid silver head-badge.



Swallow 953, built August 2012 – Robert Wade

## **Background to the styling of the bike.**

We usually try to find out what influenced the client to choose us to build a frame and what sort of personality they want the bike to have. We then work with the client to design the style and details of the frame/bike to suit. Although the bike above was a treat for myself, and in some way a tribute to my late father, the process and discussion is the same for any client.

For this particular project, I wanted to produce a new bike that reflected my memories of what a 'proper' race bike should look like when I was growing up in the 1970s. While doing this, I still wanted modern materials and genuine modern equipment (not faux 'retro' parts).

## **Outline brief for the styling and particular equipment.**

*In 1974 the Tour de France first visited the UK with a stage in Plymouth; Eddy Merckx won his 5th Tour and I dreamed of riding a racing bike. However, I had to wait until the 20th September the following year (just to make sure I didn't grow any more) for my parents to buy me my first 'proper' 5 speed racer. A flamboyant blue Elswick, with shiny alloy parts, costing £45 ( I still have the receipt). My dad insisted that I had a Brooks saddle (I still have it), just like he had back in the 1930s.*

*All the pro bikes of the '60s and '70s had rich colours, chrome and beautifully polished alloy parts. Most had Brooks saddles too. I kind of felt that I had a pro bike.*

With this 953 bike I wanted to acknowledge my cycling history and create a bike that a 14 year old in 1975, or anyone in 2012, would dream about. It's also a tribute to my father (who died in November 1975 and had been a keen cyclist in the late 1930s) that unbeknown to him, started me on a journey that allows me to create bikes like this. Two key things for the build: lots of suitably polished frame tubes and a Brooks saddle.

When working with clients we encourage them to find visual examples of bikes, details of bikes or other items that can give us an indication of how they want the bike to look. It maybe just one detail that a client likes that will enable us to design a whole bike around that, or numerous pieces of information we can morph into a design and/or style.



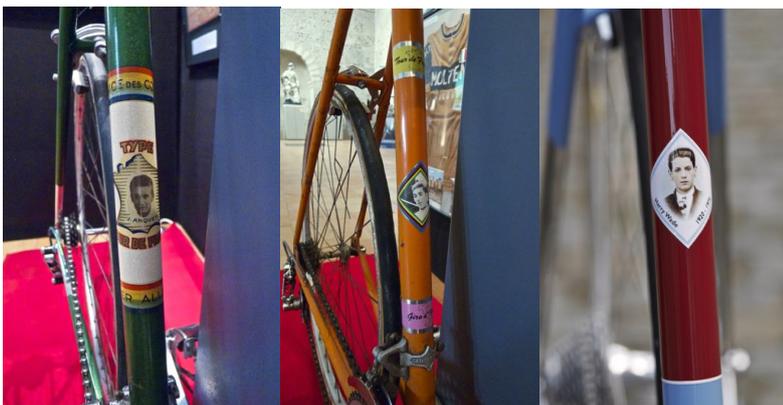
## **Frame technology for the 953**

- Tubing: Frame and forks - Reynolds 953 stainless steel is currently one of the lightest steel tubing sets available and gives an amazing "feeling alive" ride. Being stainless allows the tubing to be polished rather than chromed which is corrosive.

- Lugs and fork crown – micro cast stainless steel – precision fit for silver soldering the tubing. Can be polished as required.
- Bottom bracket shell – micro cast steel with stainless steel cable guides – as BB was to be painted, no real need to be stainless. Under BB cable guides is in stainless as over time the cable wears through the paint, so this will prevent corrosion.
- Brake bridge – micro cast stainless steel – precision part and the top plate to be engraved and polished. We have always fitted brake bridges engraved with the Swallow bird logo.
- Top eyes – machined stainless steel - precision part and outer face can be engraved and polished. We have always engraved with the Swallow bird logo or name into top eyes on our frames.
- Frame ends - micro cast stainless steel – precision part that takes a lot of wear and tear – faces where wheels are clamp to be polished.
- All braze-ons and bosses are stainless steel – the bottle bosses are 'dead ended' to prevent water entering the frame.
- Headbadge and number plate – solid sterling silver. We are the only frame builders that can fit these as Peter Bird is a Goldsmith and has his own Hallmark.
- Construction: silver soldered.
- Weight: frame only approx. 1600gm
- The key thing with the frame is that it's not just adding lots of individual details, but the consideration of each detail that makes up the overall design.

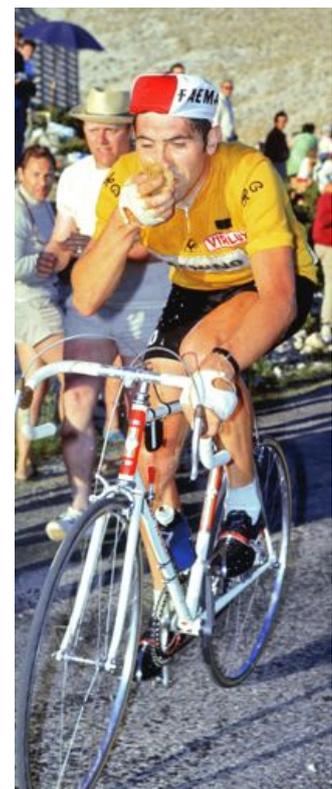
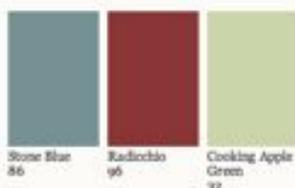
### Frame details

- Ends, stays, fork blades, fork crown, head-lugs, brake bridge top plate and faces of top eyes polished. The polishing took around 12 hours and the 10" on the rear triangle and 8" on the forks is in keeping with some of the traditional proportions used in the past.
- The colours were chosen to be both modern but with a hint of the more muted colours colours from the 1970s. Below is one of the 2013 trends from Farrow & Ball paints, the other Eddy Merckx from 1970.
- Frame decal of Harry Wade is similar to those used by pro riders on their frames through the 1950s to 70s. So it is a nod to that tradition and a way that I could commemorate my father.



#### STONE BLUE

For a more sentimental, homely feel combine rich Stone Blue, with Radicchio and Cooking Apple Green to create a cheerful look. Stone Blue is also a fantastic accent colour to a neutral backdrop like Wimborne White. This strong, uncomplicated colour is particularly effective when used on a screen or room divider. Stone Blue is bright and optimistic with a slight rural charm.



## Handle bar stem

Making a custom stem fulfils two criteria: it enables a true custom fit for the client while keeping to the aesthetic of proportions and styling of the frame. It also gives a unique attribute to the final bike. We offer stems that can be painted to match or contrast with the frame's finish, or polished as in this case



## Frame design/styling

Being made to measure ensures all contact points are perfectly positioned for fit, comfort and performance. The seat angle is 75° due to my leg proportions, that gives me the best position to keep my knee “neutral” over the pedal axle. Head angle is 73° with 30mm offset on the fork for fast but neutral steering while 42cm chainstays matched with 99cm wheelbase give all day comfort but quick handling. Tyre clearance is 'generous' compared to carbon frames and harks back to the days when roads were not so good, or unmade (even on Le Tour and the Giro d'Italia), and wider section tyres could be used.

While the polished parts, decals and the paint design are reminiscent of the 60s and 70s and remind me of the racing bikes I used to dream off. The tube dimensions however are modern “classic “ with 31.7mm down tube and 28.6mm top and seat tubes. Seat-stays are 16mm single taper. A 1” steerer was chosen to keep the elegant style and proportions allowing for the quill style stem and thread-less headset.

## Equipment specification

These were chosen for performance and to complement the overall style of the bike. Also most are from European sources, or where possible from companies still producing in the original factories, rather than out sourcing from China or the Far-East.

- Groupset – Campagnolo Athena 11speed including Record thread-less headset.
- Handlebars and seat-post – Nitto - currently only Nitto offer high quality silver polished components that can be matched – e.g. Seat-post and bars. Made in Japan since 1923.
- Handle bar stem – custom-made Swallow – see notes above.
- Saddle - Brooks limited edition Swallow in white – this is the first time in their history that Brooks have produced a white saddle – white was used to compliment the pale blue and red of the frame. The original saddle on my first race bike was a Brooks B17.
- Handle bar tape – Brooks white to complement the saddle.
- Wheels:
  - Royce Racing hubs: British-made, modern high quality hubs that retain the elegance of Campagnolo Record hubs from the '60s and '70s.
  - Amrosio Excellight SSC rims: 32 holes for classic look and strength and still made in Italy.
  - Sapim Laser Spokes: Strong and light (and suitable for my weight and riding style).
  - Tyres: Vittoria Open Corsa Evo SC 700x23c – not just for looks: high performance tyres that are hand-made and race proven.